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DOCTOR INDOCTUS.

DOCTOR INDOCTUS:

STRICTURES ON

PROFESSOR JOHN NICHOL, OF GLASGOW,

WITH REFERENCE TO HIS

ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

By Fitzedward Hall.

Aut scire oportet aut tacere.—*Old Saying.*
Non quidem doctus, sed curiosus, qui plus docet quam scit.
Petronius.

Reprinted, with Additions and Emendations, from "The Statesman."

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THESE pages are published in deference to the suggestion, that a misleading example, if secure of popular favour, deserves to be combated.

In the course of discussing words and phrases, Lord Macaulay is here appealed to frequently, but with no desire of holding up his authority as law. That his English, taken all in all, admittedly represents the most approved recent usage, is enough for the present purpose of the critic.

F. H.

January, 1880.

DOCTOR INDOCTUS.*

MANY of our readers are, doubtless, aware that a Series of Primers, introductory to science, history, and literature, is now in course of publication by Messrs. Macmillan and Co. Several of these little books we have perused with great satisfaction: so good are they, indeed, that it would be difficult to suggest how they could be materially improved.

Among the contributors to the Series in question are Professors Huxley and Jevons, Sir J. D. Hooker, Messrs. George Grove, J. Norman Lockyer, W. E. Gladstone, E. A. Freeman, and the Rev. Stopford Brooke, not to mention other writers of reigning repute. But there is, certainly, one interloper in this highly respectable group of authors; and he is such as to offer, we are com-

* *English Composition.* By John Nichol, M.A. Balliol, Oxon., LL.D., Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of Glasgow. Second edition. London: Macmillan and Co. 1879.

pelled to say, a strange contrast to his accidental companions. The general editor of the Primers of history and literature is Mr. John Richard Green, the historian; and how Mr. Green, with his well-known judgment, tact, and taste, could, otherwise than on sheer faith, have accepted Professor Nichol as a competent guide in the department of English Composition, is simply incomprehensible.

"Literary composition is putting words together, in order to convey our thoughts to others." Professor Nichol preludes thus; and little can costermongers, muffin-men, and newspaper-boys be conscious of what they are incidentally doing, as, while hawking their wares, they fill the streets with clamour. The Professor's beginning is not one of promise. How far his sequel is in keeping with it will be seen before we shall have done.

"In making usage the absolute or sole standard of accuracy and taste, there is some confusion between cause and consequence. I am likely to act rightly, if I follow the example of good men; but it is not their example which makes my action right. I am pretty sure to compose correctly, if I follow approved models. But why are they [these] approved? An author may be famous for political or moral influence, or even for the

strength of his imagination, and yet be far from a model of style. If he be a model, it is because he has, in his writings, conformed to the laws of grammar and taste. . . . . The rules you find in grammars were not made by the grammarians, whose province it is to state and explain, nor by the writers of books, whose province [duty] it is to obey them, but by the genius of the language." P. 16. That morality, as regards its sanction, depends on convention, the author would not, we surmise, maintain; and the point is one which we are not going to discuss. That linguistic usage, however, depends on convention, is indisputable. We are referred, for its warrant, to "the genius of the language." But this most inconstant thing, unless it be incessantly refashioned by a succession of divine revelations, must be the work of man. In brief, we differ from the author, in not having recourse, as he has, to the supernatural, or else to the unintelligible, in order to find the ultimate justification of usage in speech. If he had not ventured beyond his depth, he would have forborne to talk, as he does, about "some confusion between cause and consequence." But a truce to generalities.

Before proceeding to remark on our would-be instructor's precepts, we shall make some quo-

tations, to show the sort of English which, as coming from his own pen, we suppose he must hold to be exemplary.

"Observe, that 'I esteem you more than they' *or* 'more than them' *is equally* correct in grammar." P. 23.[1] If this be right, we may say: "The Thames *or* the Severn *is equally* a river." Equality is predicable of things contemplated, not alternatively, but copulatively.

"Other wrong uses of pronouns and particles *fall to be considered* under the head of Ambiguity." P. 33. The English translation of the invernacular phrase italicized is "fall under consideration."

"*Warnings* like the following may be indefinitely multiplied from the works even of justly celebrated authors." P. 40. The "warnings" consist of a string of sentences exemplifying verbal blunders; and the collection of specimens is aptly swelled by its introduction.

"We should not be left to grope for the meaning *among* a maze of words." P. 44. As well might we say: "*Among* my soup I found only one oyster."

"Note, that little is gained by the substitution

[1] Likewise, at p. 111: "A long *or* a short syllable . . . . *may equally have* the acute accent." See also pp. 18 and 28, *post.*

of 'we' for 'I.' Construct the sentence, if possible, so as to avoid *either* [both]." P. 53.

"The obscurity of the condensed style is generally *due* to an abuse of ellipses." P. 55. "Due," as used here, and again at p. 117, is not the best of modern English.

"We should be as simple, in our choice of words, as we can be, without rejecting any of the conspicuous advantages which, by the very fact of *its being*, in its vocabulary, *a composite language, the use of English* affords." P. 74. According to this, "the use of English" is "a composite language."

"If you had said 'flapping,' we *would* have laughed." P. 76. The English of England here requires "should."

"Similes should, therefore, *neither be* [be neither] trite nor fantastical." P. 77.

"Those who write against time are *persistently* verbose." P. 94. An ignorant substitute for "uniformly."

"Use no unnecessary adjectives: rather employ nouns that are *self-sufficient*." P. 94. Usage has not given "self-sufficient" the signification of "self-sufficing," or any but that of "conceited" or the like.

"The *luggage* of particles *is* an impediment to

strong speech, and *a jar* in the harmony of style." P. 95. "Luggage . . . . is . . . . a jar"!

"Especially shun the frequent repetition of conjunctions and of pronouns. The shortness of the Latin 'veni, vidi, vici' is, *in this respect*, seldom attainable," &c. P. 95. The author intends something quite other than what he says, which is, that "the shortness of the Latin, in respect of frequent repetition of conjunctions and pronouns, is seldom attainable in English."[1]

"But, when *each* particular is so emphasized," &c. P. 96. As the particulars referred to, more than two, are unspecified,[2] the proper word, in prose, is "every."[3] Landor,[4] speaking for Horne Tooke, notes this punctuality of good English.[5]

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[1] We have, in like manner, at p. 98: "'Will you ride to-morrow?' might be written, in Greek or Latin, in five different ways. But, even in English, there is, *in this respect*, considerable latitude." In what "respect"? Vague is, again, the use of "in this respect," at p. 59.

[2] Contrast: "The merchant died leaving six young sons and daughters, and bequeathed £10,000 to *each* child."

[3] "Each" is misused at p. 116, also.

[4] *Works and Life*, Vol. iv., p. 184.

[5] Lord Macaulay is notably free from the error adverted to. Nevertheless, he writes, in one place: "Only eight thousand copies were printed, much less than one to *each* parish in the kingdom." *History*, Chap. xxi. The parishes, a multitude, are not spoken of in the previous context; and hence "*every* parish" is demanded. Further, "much less," relative to "copies," is no

"The greatest advantage which an inflected possesses over an uninflected language is, the greater freedom which the former enjoys in the *disposal* of its words." P. 98. For "disposal" read, decidedly in preference, "disposition."

"When the *predicate or object are* much more impressive, or mentally prominent, than the subject, *they* may, with advantage, precede it." P. 98. A child of ten could amend this.[1]

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so good as "far fewer"; and yet "far fewer than one" is inconsistent with idiom.

[1] Dr. Johnson, however, writes, quite as ungrammatically:

"Every novelty appears more wonderful, as it is more remote from anything with which *experience or testimony have* hitherto acquainted us." *Idler*, No. 87.

Sir Joshua Reynolds has "vanity or caprice *have*," &c. *Literary Works* (ed. 1819), Vol. i., p. 66.

Bishop Thirlwall contributes the two passages which next follow:

"*A map or sea-chart are* greatly superior to either," &c. *The Pictures* (1825), p. xxx.

"Even if *Faraday or Tyndall are* not standing," &c. *Remains*, &c., Vol. iii., p. 286.

And many do as ill as the Bishop.

"*Scott or Sir E. Lytton have*, generally, some funny man," &c. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, *Cambridge Essays*, 1855, p. 176.

"*The Pope, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or even Mr. Spurgeon are* much more satisfactory guides than the prophets of the revolution," &c. Mr. Leslie Stephen, *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking* (1873). p. 127.

"*Mr. Darwin or Barnum* would claim him as *their* own." *Id.*, *Hours in a Library*, First Series (1874), p. 273.

"*Shakespeare, or Burns, or Wordsworth* can express *their*

"The close, as well as the beginning, of a sentence being prominent may also draw to itself the emphatic word," &c. P. 100. Could anything well be of more dubious import than this? The punctuation we have not meddled with.

"The third is . . . . frequent in the works, especially the verses, of *bombastical* writers." P. 106. Surely, the form "bombastical,"[1]—which, by the way, is in no dictionary,—if ever it was used at all, is as obsolete as the form "orthodoxal."

"Note, however, we must distinguish from burlesque the mingling of humour and pathos," &c. P. 106. The omission of "that," after the "however," is indefensible.[2]

"A more familiar instance of the same difference may be found on comparing almost any

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whole mode of feeling within a few lines." *Id., Hours in a Library*, Third Series (1879), pp. 183, 184.

Mr. Matthew Arnold is capable of what follows:

"*One* in five of the population *are* in school." *Schools and Universities on the Continent* (1868), p. 236.

[1] "Aquatical" is used, to no one's surprise, by Mr. Thomas Carlyle. This is no worse than "domestical" or "dramatical" would be; but the same author's hideous "consumpt," for "consumption," and "landgraphic," as the adjective of "landgrave," are much less pardonable.

[2] The fault of omission here noticed is committed again at p. 118.

verse of Milton's 'L'Allegro' with *most* any verse of his 'Il Penseroso'." P. 109. Save in Scotland, we should hardly expect the like of this from any one above the rank of the most illiterate.

"Rhyme, in the wide sense of consonance, includes the *fashion* of beginning two or more of the words in a line with the same letter." P. 119. A strange use, this, of the word "fashion"!

"Note, that the pure and mixed Trochaic, *i.e.*, the double and single rhymed ending, are often made to alternate." P. 124. What with Teutonic ellipsis and grammatical lawlessness, we here have a near approach to the very type of a vicious sentence. Indeed, one is almost disposed to say of this sentence, as the author says of a passage quoted at p. 102, that it "deserves to be burnt by the common hangman."[1]

"The variety of arrangement in English verse

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[1] We ought, perhaps, to apologize for quoting, in such close vicinity to mention of the common hangman, the following sentences from the pages of so great a celebrity as Lord Macaulay:

"If the French government can subdue England, it will do so. If the English government can subdue France, it will do so. But the power of England and France is either equal or not equal." *Miscellaneous Writings* (ed. 1860), Vol. i., pp. 298, 299.

By literal construction, two powers are here fused into one,

is almost *indefinite*."[1] P. 125. "Indefinite," used objectively, is not "boundless," but "having no fixed limits." Qualify the word by "almost," and the result is barely distinguishable from nonsense.

"Imitations of ancient metres are, as a rule not to be commended: they are little better tha

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whose equality or inequality to nothing in particular is the predicated.

"In one respect, however, the fate of the two fortresses was very different." *History*, Chap. xix.

One fate, and that differing in itself, instead of a fate to each seems to be asserted of the two fortresses, Mons and Namur.

"With the fate of the law which restored the currency was closely connected the fate of another law, which had been several years under the consideration of Parliament, and had caused several warm disputes between the hereditary and the elective branch of the legislature." *Ibid.*, Chap. xxi.

As only one "branch of the legislature" is here specifically mentioned, the image of a kind of unilateral duel is naturally called up by the words "warm disputes between." See foot-note[2] p. 35, *post*.

"His rapid elevation, his prosperity and glory, his inauguration in the hall, and his gorgeous obsequies in the abbey, had inflamed their imagination." *Ibid.*, Chap. i.

Locutions like the foregoing are rather favourites with Lord Macaulay. Still, he does not hesitate to speak of "our minds": he has no fear of being supposed, because he uses the plural, to assign us more than one mind each. "What is spirit? What are our own minds, the portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted?" *Essays* (ed. 1852), Vol. i., p. 21.

[1] And not much better than nonsense is: "Quantity, in English, *may vary indefinitely*. It depends on the length of the vowels." P. 109.

parodies." P. 127. The author's conception of a "parody" must be very elastic.

"Instances constantly occur *to prove* how much the attentive study of good models . . . . may do to promote the vigour of style." P. 128. Consequence is intended here, but is not expressed. Except to convey the idea of design, a correct writer would certainly say, for instance: "There exist authors *who prove* that some persons, before they have learned, attempt to teach." Professor Nichol not seldom reminds us of the remark of Mr. De Quincey: "I may assert boldly, that a Scotchman in the English courts, or an Englishman in the Scotch courts, might easily bring himself within the penalties of perjury by alternate misunderstandings of words that approach each other without coinciding."[1]

"Chastized" occurs at p. 11; and the adjective "dependant", at p. 28. Nearly as bad as these misspellings are such unhyphened compounds as "musket ball," "round about," "précis writing," "bull fights," "harsh sounding," "burning glass," "gold leaves," "vowel sounds," at pp. 7, 17, 56, 74, &c. If, there or elsewhere, we have mere errors of typography, why is there

[1] *Thomas De Quincey, his Life and Writings*, Vol. ii., p. 70, foot-note.

no list of corrections? Since Professor Nichol printed his book at Glasgow, under his own eye, there can, apparently, be little excuse for its not being given to the world as he wrote it.

In each of the following passages there is, also, something distinctly objectionable:

"Remember to take care that you divide words according to the component parts of their *derivation*." P. 13. A "derivation," however it may be with a derivative, cannot consist of syllables.

"Custom holds a real, and, within limits, a legitimate sway over such *questions* as the naturalization of foreign, *or* [and][1] the acceptance of new, words." P. 16.

"Note, that an adjective does not necessarily become an adverb *by* accompanying a verb." P. 21. In addition to awkwardness of construction,[2] we here have a wrong preposition.

"It is still regarded as a violation of gram-

[1] A repetition of the error here pointed out occurs at p. 31, and at p. 56. See also a passage quoted at p. 28, *post*.

[2] And the dictum—besides that it is not explicit enough to serve for guidance,—has a worse fault than this. Does an adjective ever become, by position, an adverb?

The author, in illustration of his remark given in the text, quotes the verse:

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Then follows: "'Uneasy' is here an adjective, qualifying 'head.'" This strikes us as highly unscientific parsing. In "it

mar *to confound,* as *is often done,* 'broke' and 'broken'," &c. P. 21. Here is a most slovenly confusion of active and passive.[1]

"The infinitive of the verb is now only used, substantively, as a nominative." P. 22. Vague, with a misplacement of "only."

"'The greater number of such periods is ungraceful and obscure.' The 'is' here should

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sounds *hollow*," "he stands *straight*," do the adjectives qualify the pronouns?

At p. 28, we cite the rule: "Abstain, in prose, from using adjectives for adverbs," &c.

Something more than Professor Nichol propounds is necessary, however, to enable the learner to pass judgment on the ensuing extracts from Lord Macaulay's *History*.

"They mustered *strong* in the capital." Chap. xi.

"He is in imminent danger of falling two thousand feet *perpendicular*." Chap. xiii.

"His judgment was clearest and surest, when responsibility pressed *heaviest* on him, and when difficulties gathered *thickest* around him." Chap. xix.

"On the whole, however, things as yet looked not *unfavourably* for James." Chap. ix.

"It tasked all the art of Kneller to make her look *tolerably* on canvas." Chap. xx.

And, from the same author: "The knife of the deadly machine rose and fell too *slow* for their work of slaughter." *Miscellaneous Writings* (ed. 1860), Vol. ii., p. 151.

Not of all these passages, we suspect, would many living stylists think fit to imitate the grammar. Would Lord Macaulay have approved: "The rose smells *sweetly*"?

[1] For another instance of such confusion, see p. 45.

Mr. Ruskin writes, no less heedlessly: "You will find *stated*, th as much clearness *as I am able*, in the first and fifth Lectures," &c. *Val d'Arno* (1874), p. 105.

rather *be* 'are.'" P. 25. To justify this, it must be shown that the verb "be" has, as one of its meanings, "be changed to."[1]

"'He fell on his knees to the Earl of Arundel that arrested him' is wrong, unless it means (which here it cannot) that there were several Earls of Arundel, and *that one* arrested him." P. 33. The ellipsis here, in order to avoid "that that one," namely, "that the one in question," is very harsh. Or is "that" a conjunction, with the "one" after it used for "one of them"? In the latter case, there is gross ambiguity.

"Coining words contrary to analogy, or without sufficient reason, is a *vicious* kind of forgery." P. 37. Yet the author is merciless against surplusage.

"The almost exclusive use of native[2] does not, like the extreme use of Latin words, savour of absurdity; but *it*, too, is a fault of style." P. 47. The "it"[3] is Scotch and ungainly; and the "extreme"—for "excessive",—and "absurdity"

[1] "Be," for "be changed to," is found at pp. 18, 19 (*ter*), 30, 83, also.

[2] And we read, at p. 73, of "the *native* portion of our vocabulary." The expression intimates historical knowledge of a very novel character.

[3] This hyperborean "it" offers itself at pp. 12, 19 (*bis*), 94, and 119, also.

For the author's "they," in lieu of "these," see p. 23, *post*.

are inexact. Further, the separation of "native" from "words" is in bad taste, to say the least. Sentences similarly constructed are found at pp. 8 and 105. At p. 101, we read: "'He arrived at, and was ultimately confirmed in, this decision.' Rather write: 'He arrived at this decision, and was ultimately confirmed in it.'" To our thinking, the sentence here condemned is very tolerable, as compared with the one on which we have just remarked.

"To drop the distinction would be, by an affectation of simplicity, to fall into obscurity *on the other side.*" P. 47. The words in italics are pleonastic, and also are a false idiom, let alone their "vaulting ambition."

"'The outrages . . . . Turks' *is better than if the parenthesis were placed* either before or after." P. 69.[1] Who can approve of this?

"Do not introduce too many qualifying clauses into one sentence, *nor* stretch it beyond its natural close." P. 69. This, as to its "nor," is hardly the English we meet with in prose.

"It has been observed, that very simple ideas are often conveyed *most*[2] *forcibly* by signs; *i.e.*,

[1] A like construction recurs at p. 80.

[2] At p. 93, "most" is again misused for "the most."

"When two emphatic syllables follow one another, more stress is laid on *the* one than on the other; and that on which [the]

'leave the room', by pointing to the door." P. 72. Read "the most forcibly"; the relative superlative, not the absolute, being here intended. And "*i.e.*" is misused for "*e.g.*"

"Such signs, or rude *pantomimes*, will, it is true, not carry us far." P. 73. What authority is there for giving "pantomimes" the sense of "pantomimic gestures"?

"Avoid, equally, all *loud* or exaggerated language." P. 75. The author is recommended to avoid, equally, all slang. And how can he justify himself for writing, as he does, at p. 118, "the most *scandalous* rhyme is where," &c.?

"We must not degrade dignified *material* by mean comparisons," &c. P. 80. An affected use of "material."

"In more serious matters, we are often tempted to overstate the truth, for the sake of *the* antithesis." P. 88. "Antithesis," being abstract here, should take no "the."

"Certain forms of humour, notably that most *familiar* [prevalent] in[1] America," &c. P. 89.

"The writings of Swift, of Junius, and of Heine abound *in* [with] these," &c. P. 90.

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greater stress is laid is generally regarded as the sole accented syllable." P. 111. Here, "the" is to be expunged in one place, and supplied in another.

[1] This is again found at p. 126.

"Metalepsis is applied, in rhetoric, to playing on *one word* [a word taken] in different senses." P. 92.

"Catachresis is a term applied to *words* used in *a sense* obviously different from that *naturally* belonging to *them*." Pp. 92, 93. Put "a word" and "it." "Words" have "senses."[1] And what is the sense "*naturally* belonging" to a word? Nature is one thing; and ordinary convention is quite another thing.

"As a rule, young writers ought to be chary of using figures of speech. They [these] ought never to be sought for," &c. P. 93. "They" would be right, only if referring to "young writers."[2] The author often errs in his choice and employment of pronouns. We have already noticed how he mismanages "it." Both "they" and "it" are included in a list of words which, at p. 60, he calls "the great stumbling-blocks of our language." To one whose mother-tongue is not English, those words are seen to be, indeed, "stumbling-blocks."

"The same rule applies to force as to perspi-

[1] A mistake like that here pointed out is made at p. 76, and again at p. 84.

[2] "They," for "these," is found at p. 16, also. See p. 8, *ante*.

cuity of style." P. 93. How this must perplex a school-boy!

"The same sentiment which diffused over several paragraphs will appear as a platitude, when condensed into a sentence will seem original." P. 93. This should be entirely rewritten. The author, as a punctuator, also appears here in a strange light.

"Therefore avoid concluding the sentence with a weak or insignificant word, as a pronoun, adverb, or *a* preposition." P. 100. Either omit "a" before "preposition," or supply "an" before "adverb."[1]

"One advantage of this arrangement is, that we know when the sentence is *done* [finished]." P. 101.

"Such constructions in the works of Dean Swift show the need of some canons by which to test even great *composers*, and raise the question *how are we* to reform loose sentences." P. 102. "Composers" is here very oddly applied. And why the interrogational "how are we"? "I asked him *would he do it*," and such phrases, had much better be avoided.

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[1] "The grave [accent] is practically equivalent to *an* absence of accent." P. 110. "Absence," here abstract, should dispense with "an."

"Propositions which *would have at first appeared* too strong," &c. P. 105. "Would at first have appeared" is far better.

"*Accent*, though *the acute* more frequently falls on long than on short syllables, has no necessary connexion with quantity." P. 110. This is as though one were to say: "About *language, the English* excepted, he can tell you nothing." The abstract and the concrete should not be mixed up in this manner.

"But this liberty should be sparingly *indulged* [in]." P. 112.

"Rarely the strongest accent is quite separate from the pause." P. 115. Inversion like this is not allowable in prose.

"Almost all English poetry before the time of Chaucer *relies* largely on the same principle." P. 120. More than once the author thus misuses "rely."

"The verse of the old ballads is, generally, irregular to excess; iambs and trochees being *tumbled about* on no apparent system." P. 125. Yet Professor Nichol, as will be seen, is very severe against what he takes to be vulgarity.[1]

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[1] Legislators on literary composition often deliver themselves much as if their legislation were not self-applicable. To Lord Kames, Dr. Campbell, and Dr. Blair one would hardly look for

Though he prescribes laws to others, the author is largely a law to himself. Here follow some of his rules, with samples of his own infraction of them appended :

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modes of speech likely to serve as models: too often, as Lord Macaulay says of certain Irish Papists, their phraseology is "grotesque, as is always the phraseology of those who think in one language, and express their thoughts in another." But we have, assuredly, a right to expect from Archbishop Whately, what we are far from getting, a uniform style of expression somewhat superior to the ordinary. If only to keep Professor Nichol in countenance, we copy out a selection of infirm sentences from His Grace's *Rhetoric:*

"Not only the word 'rhetoric' itself, but also those used in defining it, have been taken in various senses." Introduction.

"Some part of the rules to be observed in oratory, or rules analogous to these, are applicable to such compositions." Introduction.

"It was necessary to prove that cooperation could alone render their resistance effectual." Chap. ii.

"Universally, indeed, it is a fault carefully to be avoided, to express feeling more vehemently than that the audience can go along with the speaker." Chap. ii.

"There is but little eloquence in convincing men that they are in the right, or inducing them to approve a character which coincides with their own." Chap. ii.

"In Dr. Campbell's ingenious dissertation, ... he [Dr. C.] remarks," &c. Chap. iii.

"If the material is too stubborn to be speedily cleft, we must patiently continue our efforts for a longer time, in order to accomplish it; but this is to be done, not by making each blow fall more slowly, which would only enfeeble them, but by often-repeated blows." Chap. iii.

"It will often happen that the single friend to whom he is able to speak fluently shall be one whose good opinion he more values, and to whose wisdom he is more disposed to look up, than that of all the others together." Chap. iv.

In the same volume occur "allude," for "refer," again and

"Without [*sic*] the adversative, prefer a colon. 'Prosperity showeth vice: adversity virtue.'" P. 10. But: "To err is human; to forgive, divine." P. 12. Further, whereas the second sentence is, we contend, faultless in its point-

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again; "notwithstanding," for "nevertheless"; "to dissuade a measure," "on the outset," "a pompous spout"; "most loose," as a relative superlative; and "from thence," though Dr. Campbell's censure of the similarly pleonastic "from whence" is quoted with tacit approbation.

In the interest of distinctness, or for some other good reason, every one of the preceding excerpts calls for amendment. And yet Archbishop Whately, with amazing disregard of fact, speaks of "the *obscurity* of the style of Bentham"; just as Southey, who designates the great publicist and utilitarian as "the metaphysico-critico-politico-patriotico-phoolo-philosopher," twaddles vacuously, like a very imbecile, about the "*opaque* works" of "the Jeremy of all Jeremies."

Travelling out of the record, Archbishop Whately, in a rampant tirade against that eminent thinker, pronounces, that "unmixed contempt" "is due to" "no inconsiderable portion of his tenets." If we bear in mind the gross indocility and the incurable bigotry and prejudice of His Sacrosanctitude of Dublin, it is but little in excess of the extravagant injustice evinced in that judgment, to compare its author's competence to gauge a Bentham with that of a weasel to appreciate a seraph.

Mr. De Quincey, professedly a most punctilious æsthetician, lapses, in his essay on Style, into a very thorough-going illustration of right principles reversed: "Confining our notice to people of celebrity, we may say that the House of Socrates (*Domus Socratica* is the expression of Horace) were those who next attempted to popularize Greek prose; viz., the old gentleman himself, the founder of the concern, and his two apprentices, Plato and Xenophon. We acknowledge a sneaking hatred towards the whole household, founded chiefly on the intense feeling we entertain, that all three were humbugs. We own the stony impeachment." *Works* (ed. 1862, &c.), Vol. x., pp. 214, 215.

ing, the first exhibits two mistakes, that is to say, in not having a semi-colon after "vice," and in not having a comma after "adversity."

"The first word of a direct quotation" requires, we are told, a capital. P. 14. But: "He said 'when do you mean to come back?'" P. 12.

"Abstain, in prose, from using adjectives for adverbs, or [*sic*] *vice versâ*." P. 20. But: "The *above* should be either," &c. P. 30. The author, in seven other places, makes "above" an adjective. Again: "The following are *typical* bad rhymes." P. 117. As the rhymes adduced are not "typical," except of *badness*, the writer would have done better to put "typically bad."

"Sometimes, however, two subjects are so closely connected as to make a single notion. 'Hill and dale *doth* boast thy blessing' is admissible. So, in Shakespeare: 'All *is* but toys: Renown and Grace *is* dead.'" P. 24. But: "A Subordinate Clause is a clause the construction and meaning of which *is* dependent on the principal or leading assertion." P. 6. Surely, "construction" and "meaning" do not "make a single notion."[1] And no such notion is implied

[1] Nor do "choice" and "arrangement" "make a single notion" in: "A judicious choice and arrangement of the vowel-sounds *is* an important element in the music of all verse." Pp. 107, 108.

in any of the examples given to illustrate the rule. "Milk and water *is* harmless" is right, when we mean "milk and water combined." Yet, even here, though there is indissoluble connexion, there is not "a single notion." [1]

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[1] The passages from Lord Macaulay's *History*, transcribed below, are here relevant:

"To fierce spirits, ... it seemed that to waylay and murder the king and his brother *was* the shortest and surest way," &c. Chap. ii.

"The brilliancy of the shops and the luxury of the private dwellings far *surpasses* anything that England could then show." Chap. iii.

"The difficulty and expense of conveying large packets from place to place *was* so great," &c. Chap. iii.

"Every sight and sound *was* thought to indicate the approach of pursuers." Chap. v.

"To sit near him at the theatre, and to hear his criticisms on a new play, *was* regarded as a privilege." Chap. vi.

"In the neighbourhood of the little cluster of villages *was* some copsewood and some pasture-land." Chap. xviii.

"The equipping and manning of the ships *was* urged forward with vigour." Chap. xviii.

"There *was* far less industry and energy, among the labouring classes, than in England." Chap. xxiii.

The same authority has, elsewhere: "Both what was good and what was bad in Goldsmith's character *was*, to his associates, a perfect security that he would never commit such villany." *Miscellaneous Writings* (ed. 1860), Vol. ii., p. 258.

In Mr. Macvey Napier's *Correspondence*, p. 289, he is also represented as writing: "Everything and everybody *is* languid."

Dr. Johnson has: "To say nothing and to do nothing *is* the utmost of its reach." *Idler*, No. 92.

"The plan and execution of the 'Friend' *is* so utterly unsuitable to the public taste, as to preclude all rational hopes of its suc-

We have already cited the rule prescribing that "number," as in "the greater *number* of such periods," is to take a plural verb.[1] But: "A *number* of small sentences *leaves*[2] the same paltry impression on a page that a *number* of small words *does* on a sentence." P. 103. Furthermore, the meaning intended is expressed but ill, unless a "paltry impression" be an "impression of paltriness."

"Use the subjunctive, where you disbelieve in

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cess." Coleridge (1809), in *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, Vol. iii., p. 259.

"I found . . . . that beauty and effect *was*, sometimes, largely lost, if it was impossible to render line by line." Professor F. W. Newman, *The Iliad of Homer*, &c. (1856), Preface, p. vii.

"Their skill, beauty, and correctness *is* immensely superior." *Id.*, *The Text of the Iguvine Inscriptions*, &c. (1864), p. vi.

And such sentences might be multiplied without end, as every careful reader quite well knows.

Kindred English, as to partiality for the singular verb and for ellipsis, to that of these sentences, is largely written by the educated of the present age; and the English which has their generally consentient warrant is secure from the protest of any person of respectable judgment. Neither two plural substantives or pronouns, nor a plural and a singular, nor two names of unrelated actions or concrete things, nor two proper names, may be nominatives to a verb in the singular; and here, if we further allow for a rule touching "every," by itself or in composition, seems to be about the limit of restriction. That considerations of euphony, however, also have, now and then, their weight in determining good usage in the matter under discussion, is not to be denied.

[1] See p. 19, *ante*.

[2] And so writes Dr. Johnson. "A very small *number has*," &c. *Idler*, No. 18.

the condition [*sic*] being realized, or protest against its being accepted." P. 30. But: "If we do not know whether a distant object *is* male or female, we must speak of 'a person.'" P. 73. Again: "Besides the rest of the voice natural at the close, there is, in the course of every line, unless it *be* very short, another pause, more or less marked, the position of which affects the rhythm." P. 114. Also: "Every one can write correctly, if he *choose*." P. 128.

"Especially beware of using nouns for adjectives, ... and hybrids like 'knowledge-qualification.'" P. 38. But, as exhibiting a compound quite as uncouth as "knowledge-qualification": "It is essential to good poetry to let the *rhythm-emphasis* fall on the chief part of an emphatic word." P. 115. And is not "art-criticism," which occurs at p. 46, a "hybrid?" Even "self-practice" is forbidden to us by the author.

"Avoid the affectation of using adjectives or adverbs as nouns." P. 38. But: "This rule is violated in the *following*." [1] P. 62. "Sentences" is not premised.

"'It was an example of the love *to form* comparisons.' Read 'of forming.'" P. 39. "Neglect

[1] Fifteen times the author thus used "following."

of the proper sequence of particles" is here the point under treatment. But: "Note, that, in some cases, such collocations are allowable, with the view *to unfold* what is involved," &c. P. 49.

"He told me he had given John the gun the gunsmith brought him." P. 55. This is given as an instance of "excessive contraction," and somewhat unadvisedly. Yet we find: "Concentration of phrase is like a burning-glass, which adds to the brightness and the heat of the rays it gathers into a focus." P. 93. Is not there about as much of "excessive contraction" here?

"'Not to exasperate him, I *only* spoke a few words.' Read 'spoke *only*.'" P. 65. This follows a warning against the mislocation of "only." But: "The possessive form *only* attaches to the last term of a title." P. 19. Again: "Americanisms . . . . are *only* admissible in satirical pictures of American manners." P. 35. Once more: "These are *only* pure when the line ends with a double rhyme." P. 123.[1]

A direct contradiction is now to be noticed. "When it refers to an object, 'that' may be omitted: 'The man you speak of,' for 'the man *that* you speak of,'" &c. P. 32. Here, that . . .

[1] See also a passage quoted at p. 19, *ante*. "Only" is misplaced elsewhere, too, as at pp. 52 (*bis*), 53, 76.

of," for "of whom," is expressly allowed. But: "The following are bad examples: . . . 'Envy is a vice that clever men are often guilty *of*.'" P. 100. Just as good, that is to say, perfectly good, is the sentence immediately afterwards cited for condemnation: "He drew his sword which he killed her *with*." Then follows, uncritically enough, as if belonging to the same category: "I could not, though I wished *to*." The comment on these sentences, which is strangely heedless, except with reference to the last of them, is: "In these cases, the preposition is left, as it were, dangling in the air."

At p. 128, in the concluding paragraph of his treatise, Professor Nichol remarks: "The further we advance in questions of style, the less can we hope to learn from rules." A person who ventures to write a book on English Composition ought, assuredly, to have advanced, in questions of style, some way beyond the vulgar herd; and his offering himself as a teacher of this mystery is an implied proof that he regards himself as among those who have done so. But, when so far forward,—fortunately or unfortunately for us, hich means, for us adepts,—it seems that "the ss can we hope to learn from rules." The inciple here laid down is one which Professor

Nichol amply sustains in his own person. In fact, we must acknowledge him to be a most proficient artist. His progress has been such, that, whether he hopes, or does not hope, to learn anything new from rules propounded by others, he has risen superior to the rules propounded by himself. As to many of these latter rules, his pupils are to be strongly recommended to follow, in the article of heeding them practically, the precedent set by their master.

Of the author's erroneous, defective, or nebulous teaching we might give numerous samples, in addition to those already produced and those about to be produced.

"'A' and 'the' should be repeated, when they introduce two or more nouns, or adjectives, referring to distinct things.[1] *E.g.:* 'She had a black and white dog.' If two dogs are meant, *it should be* [one ought to say]: 'She had a black and a white dog.' 'The Queen sent for the secretary and treasurer' should be [altered to] 'the secretary and the treasurer,' unless it *means to imply* [is meant to be implied] that the two

[1] This rule, as meant to be construed, the author palpably violates in a passage quoted at p. 15, *ante:* "Note, that the pure and [the] mixed Trochaic," &c. Much better, moreover, would be "pure Trochaics and mixed."

offices ['secretary' and 'treasurer' are not 'offices'] were combined in one person." P. 18. The rule here inconditely laid down admits, as worded, of a tedious variety of interpretations. To mention one of its faults, its ambiguous "referring to distinct things" forbids us to speak of "the rise and progress of divers empires."[1] Again, what are offered as examples under it are nothing to the point, but would illustrate a rule prescribing the employment of a single "a" or "the." What the author intends to enjoin is something like this: When two or more substantives, connected by conjunctions, are not appellatives of one and the same person or thing, "a" or "the," if required before one of them, is required before each; and likewise before each of two or more adjectives, connected by conjunctions, qualifying the names of different persons or things. This doctrine, unmodified, we cannot, however, acquiesce in. Conformably to it, we may not say, for instance, "the English and Dutch Governments."[2] But

[1] Or to follow Lord Macaulay in: "There must be a solemn lebate and decision in Parliament." *History*, Chap. xxii. Like his is: "He could not, he said, take leave of the Lords and Gentlemen before him," &c. *Ibid.*, Chap. xxiii. See also two extracts, the third and seventh, in the foot-note to p. 29, *ante*.

[2] "They watched his lips, in the hope that he would, at least, let fall some unguarded word, indicating the hopes or fears enter-

we must pass on, after asking, by the by, whether it can be that some crotchet about "the" induced the author to describe himself, on his title-page, unidiomatically, as "Professor of English Language and Literature."

We are told, at p. 22, that such a construction as "from to die" is "inadmissible in prose;" as if it were still admissible in poetry.

"Observe, that 'which' is no longer used, as in Shakespeare's time, in reference to persons, except in asking a question: '*Which* of the brothers?'" P. 22. Then we may not say "As to the two brothers, I know *which* you refer to."

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tained by the English and Dutch Governments." Lord Macaulay, *History*, Chap. xxiii.

Who would here prefer "the English and the Dutch Government"? Or "the English and the Dutch Governments"? Or "the English Government and the Dutch"? Not one in a thousand, we surmise, whatever applause he might reckon on from so-called grammarians.

In consistency, Lord Macaulay would elsewhere have put "the hereditary and elective branches of the legislature." See a passage quoted in the foot-note to p. 15, *ante*.

In the first Chapter of his *History*, he has two sentences, the first of which, on account of its "both . . . . and," would well have taken an additional "the," so as to conform it to the second:

"Both the national and religious feelings of the population had been wounded."

"Both the religious and the professional feelings of the army were deeply wounded."

Under the rubric of "Wrong Numbers," we are told to eschew such concord as that shown in: "*A plurality* of subjects *require* a plural verb." P. 24. This is insufficient; for "plurality," like "majority,"—as in "*a plurality* of voters,"—may sometimes take a verb in the plural, indisputably.[1]

"It is wrong to say: . . . 'None *have* come.'" P. 26. If so, very few persons, within the last century or two, have known how to write proper

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[1] "The great *majority* of the inquisitors *were* notoriously hostile to the accused statesman." Lord Macaulay, *Essays* (ed. 1852), Vol. ii., p. 168.

"The *majority was* for rejecting the proposition," &c. *Id.*, *History*, Chap. ix.

The ensuing extracts, from the same author, are noticeable:

"*A handful* of daring adventurers from a civilized nation *wander* to some savage country, and *reduce* the aboriginal race to bondage." *Essays* (ed. 1852), Vol. ii., p. 453.

"*A* mighty and ancient *priesthood were* weeping over the remains of their chief." *Ibid.*, Vol. iii., p. 267.

That which follows we may scruple to approve: "It was commonly believed that *half a million of human beings was* crowded into that labyrinth of lofty alleys," &c. *Ibid.*, Vol. iii., pp. 288, 289.

Again we quote Lord Macaulay, *History*, Ch. v.:

"The *foot were* divided into six regiments."

"And now the king's *artillery* came up. *It* had been posted half a mile off," &c.

None but a very careful writer would be likely to distinguish as here.

We add two sentences in which confusion of numbers reaches about its highest possible pitch:

"Nor *were the house of commons, many of whom were* interested

English.[1] That "none *has* come" is as often right, we do not deny, however. "Is there any news of the war? None *has* come since yesterday."[2] But we now rarely imitate the grammar of "There *is* none that *doeth* good," &c.

"Dare" and "make" are named, at p. 29, as

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in these sales, inclined to let in the former owners without conditions." Henry Hallam, *Constitutional History of England* (ed. 1842), Vol. ii., p. 7.

"It is melancholy to think how little that *portion* of the community which *is* quite at ease in *their* circumstances *have* to do, in a social way, with the humbler classes." William Wordsworth (1844), in *Memoirs*, &c. (1851), Vol. ii., p. 409.

[1] "He . . . . passed through the capital in the morning twilight, when *none were* in the streets except shop-boys taking down the shutters," &c. Lord Macaulay (1844), *Miscellaneous Writings* (ed. 1860), Vol. ii., p. 182. In Vol. i., pp. 193 and 210, respectively, are "*none . . . . possess*" and "*none . . . . have*."

"It had a force and energy which *none* but *men* driven mad by oppression would venture to encounter."

"It seems certain, therefore, that, had *none* but political *causes* been at work," &c.

These two passages, with the three first in the next note, are from the First Chapter of Lord Macaulay's *History*.

[2] "Many English kings had occasionally committed unconstitutional acts; but *none* had ever systematically attempted to make *himself* a despot, and to reduce the parliament to a nullity."

"Nathaniel Fiennes, inferior to *none* of his contemporaries in talents for civil business," &c.

In what follows, "none," for "nothing," savours of quaintness: "It had *none* of the invidious character of a caste."

In Lord Macaulay's *History*, Chap. xxi., we find also: "There were, indeed, many periodical papers; but *none* of those papers could be called *a newspaper*." "None," here apparently meant to be emphatic, would well be replaced by "not one."

among verbs after which, in prose, "to" is omitted; "but poetry sometimes assumes the license of introducing it." Eminent prose-writers have "dare to" and "make to" not at all unfrequently.[1] And why has the author omitted to warn his compatriots not to write "cause him go," &c.?

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[1] "The Tory pamphleteers boasted that not one fanatic *dared to* move tongue or pen in defence of his religious opinions." Lord Macaulay, *History*, Chap. v. (last page of Vol. i.). This work has many more such instances. We have counted seven in Chapters viii., xii., xxi., and xxii. See also Lord Macaulay's *Essays* (ed. 1852), vol. iii., p. 378.

"None *dared to* trust him." Cowper, *Works* (ed. Southey, 1835, &c.), Vol. v., p. 290.

"The short interval between Cromwell's death and the Restoration exhibits the picture of a nation either so wearied with changes as not to feel, or so subdued by military power as not to *dare to* show, any care, or even preference, with regard to the form of their government." C. J. Fox, *A History of the Early Part of the Reign of James the Second* (ed. 1808), p. 19.

"We would *dare to* affirm," &c. Coleridge, *Treatise on Method* (1818), Sect. i.

"But, on this feast-day of their mighty master, none *dared to* make experiments on his sufferance." Mr. De Quincey, *Works* (ed. 1862, &c.), Vol. xiii., p. 280.

"A little while ago she *dared to* insist that we should admit, &c." "They *dared to* accuse our General," &c. W. S. Landor, *Works and Life* (1876), Vol. v., pp. 461 and 471.

"The man who *dares* boldly *to* confront a tyrant." Prof. John Conington, *Miscellaneous Writings* (1872), Vol. i., p. 357.

See also Cardinal Newman, *Apologia*, &c. (1864), p. 203.

De Foe has "I *durst to* believe." *Robinson Crusoe* (ed. 1840), Vol. i., p. 210. Even now, if we wished to be extremely impressive, "I *dare to* say" would not be thought barbarous.

"What, then, *made* us *to* differ?" "We believe that the contest

At p. 30, we are instructed to use the subjunctive, invariably, after the conjunction "though." Yet who would not say: "*Though* the sun *shines* brightly, it is a very cold day"?

Further, we are told to put the subjunctive after "might," "would," "could," and "should," in all cases. We are, therefore, not allowed to say: "You *might* even maintain that he *is* wholly wrong," and "I *should* think he *was* not in the right."

"The words used in good English composition must be [current] classic English words." P. 33.

"*One* unanimous cry" is ridiculously ostracized, at p. 48, as being tautological. When it is not used to preclude the idea of a plurality of unanimous cries, its "one" is simply intensative, which "a," in "*a* unanimous cry," is not. Equally tautological with "*one* unanimous cry" is "*two* bicycles," or "*two double*-barrelled guns."

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in which the Parliament was engaged against the King was a contest for the security of our property, for the liberty of our persons, for everything which *makes* us *to* differ from the subjects of Don Miguel." Lord Macaulay, *Essays* (ed. 1852), Vol. i., pp. 155 and 466.

Sir George W. Dasent, in his *Popular Tales from the Norse*, puts "to" after "bade"; and yet it produces no shock. Cardinal Newman has "must be *let to* range," in his *Callista* (1856), p. 290. Bishop Wilberforce has "is *let to* speak," in his *Essays*, &c. (1874), Vol. i., p. 279.

"Lesser" is classed, at p. 49, among "single attributes which are, themselves, tautologies." "Especially avoid" such, we are commanded. Yet "lesser" is not be repudiated absolutely. Who would write, or speak, of "the greater and the *less* mysteries"? And, when Lord Macaulay, treating of "the great Whig plot" and "the Rye House plot," refers to the latter as "the *lesser* plot,"[1] could his expression be improved?

The rule concerning adjectives, given at p. 64, leads it to be inferred that "body politic" "governor general," "heir apparent," "notary public," "prince regent," and "verb active" are illegitimate expressions.

"It is better to say 'If Thou hadst been here, my brother *had* not died,' than 'my brother *would* not *have* died.'" P. 95. Unquestionably, the former of these two expressions is now hardly endurable, unless in poetry.

On the subject of punctuation, theoretically, the author is most unsatisfactory; and, as concerns practice, worse stopping than his own has seldom fallen in our way. Having repunctuated him in nearly all of our numerous quotations, we ought to let the reader see how he himself punctuates. We find, then: "But in ordinary

[1] *History*, Chap. ii.

writing the fewer italics we use the better." P. 14. Also: "While the earth remaineth seed-time and harvest and cold and heat and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease." P. 96. Other instances like these occur at pp. 11 and 66. And sometimes the want of punctuation leaves the sense uncertain, as at p. 52: "Long sentences have their proper place as elements of variety in an extended composition." Other such sentences, viz., "In the following," &c., "A page," &c., are seen at pp. 102 and 103. Again: "'Monarchy *stood* prostrate at the foot of the Church,' read 'was' or 'fell.'" P. 42. And so often, throughout the volume.

Much as we might say of the author's rules how to punctuate, we must content ourselves, here, with adverting to a couple of them.

"Reasons are preceded by semicolons. . . . . So are clauses in opposition, when the second is introduced by an adversative." P. 10. Yet "for," ushering in a reason, has a comma before it, at pp. 5, 81, and 90; a colon, at pp. 34 and 72; and nothing at all, in the second line of p. 99. Further, "but," leading in the latter of two clauses in opposition, has a comma before it, at p. 18 and in twenty-four other places; a colon, at pp. 15, 16, 19, 72, 80 (*bis*), 87, 91, 94, 128; and,

at p. 76, a blank: "A word cannot be too natural but it may be too familiar." From carelessness in punctuation, the author seems, at p. 19, to announce his personal taste, rather than to lay down a law: "We may say 'The country whose fertility is great,' but prefer 'the fertility of which.'"

Among certain "adverbs" which demand a comma after them, "however" is specified, at p. 12. On the contrary, it is only when an adverb, that "however" is never to be followed by a comma; as in: "*However* well off he may be, he complains." Professor Nichol, a Doctor of Laws who has not yet mastered the parts of speech, means to speak of the *conjunction* "however;" and, moreover, his own dealings with it would lead to the conclusion, that it is a matter of indifference, with him, whether it takes a comma, or not. "They are *however* admissible when a clause is obviously thrust in." P. 13. "In dramatic dialogue *however* they are omitted." P. 14. "*However* many that do not read themselves are seduced by others that do." P. 102. On the other hand: "There should, *however*, in every instance," &c. P. 6. See also pp. 12, 20 (*bis*), 24, 25, 49, 67, 74, 79, 82, 106.

With "however," as to requiring a comma,

"at least" is named; but, in two places at p. 66, the comma is wanting after this phrase.[1]

To dismiss punctuation, there should be, in what follows, only a comma, where we find a semicolon: "In the phrase 'you will,' as I can have no sure knowledge of your determination; the 'will' drops into the sense of a milder or less emphatic assertion of futurity." P. 21.

The Professor cashiers good English, and now and then recommends bad English.

"'I found she *was* gone out of the house' is incorrect; for the addition of 'out of' makes the verb transitive." P. 21. This is whim, and worse than whim. In "he was from home," is "was" transitive, because of "from"? The phrase condemned is perfectly correct. Change its "was" to "had," and it is still correct, but bears a different meaning. "It *is* all gone" is not the same as "It *has* all gone." Again, where Lord Macaulay writes "Mary *was* gone, cut off in the prime of life,"[2] his phrase, while unimpeachable, could not be changed to "Mary

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[1] Not always, however, is "at least" to take a comma. See below, p. 48, l. 4 from the foot.

[2] *History*, Chap. xx. "Houses, barns, furniture, implements of husbandry, herds, flocks, horses, *were* gone." *Ibid.*, Chap. xviii. "Those times *were* gone, never to return." *Ibid.*, Chap. xix.

had gone," without entirely altering the sense. Usage constitutes grammar; and that which, in the guise of grammatical legislation, contravenes usage, is not true grammar, but false.

"Note, that 'than' does not govern the accusative. 'The Duke of Argyll, than *whom* no man was heartier in the cause,' is wrong." P. 23. Cobbett,[1] quoting this very passage, boldly and ridiculously says that we must substitute "who" for its "whom." Professor Nichol does not inform us what we are to do, in order to set it right. The authority of very excellent writers justifies "than whom;" and there is an end. What is the harm, if it requires a special grammatical rule? Formerly we went beyond "than *whom*," in founding constructions on the Latin ablative after the comparative degree: "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier *than them* both."

"When two or more things act together, the plural is correct: 'The King, with the Lords and Commons, *form* a good government.'" P. 26. Without question, we should here have "forms." "The wind, with the thunder and lightning, *was* alarming." Three things here "act together;" but, as the wording of the sen-

[1] *A Grammar of the English Language*, § 200.

tence denotes accompaniment, rather than concert, the "was" cannot be bettered.[1]

"'Those paragraphs exhibit a style which *they who* can imitate should esteem themselves happy.' Supply 'persons,' which is understood, and it becomes evident we should say 'those who.'" P. 31. "They who," except as having a slight tinge of quaintness, is liable to no adverse criticism. The sentence quoted is strangely called an "otherwise awkward *expression.*" Worse than "awkward" is the stricture on it. For how is "persons" there "understood"? If it be understood, "they who" is, when filled out, "they persons who."

"'*The real and the beautiful* met together, and the result was my novel.'" The way of writing, here instanced, we are counselled, at p. 38, to avoid, as being "affectation." It may be abused, or overdone, we admit; but the example given is well nigh as inoffensive as "*the long and the short* of it."

"'Some anomalies have never been *excepted against* by any writer.' Read 'taken exception to.'" P. 39. But is not "been taken excep-

[1] In our apprehension, the sentence which Professor Nichol commends is as bad as the following, from Henry Hallam: "Cartwright, with several of his sect, *were* summoned before the ecclesiastical commission." *Constitutional History of England* (ed. 1842), Vol. i., p. 202.

tion to by" even worse than the original? Put "to" for "against."

"'While these violences *were carrying on*, Clarendon came over.' Read 'being carried on.'" P. 42. Intolerable! Imperfects passive are now pretty thoroughly established, as matters of option, where euphony is not transgressed. The substitute here proposed is much too drawling. Besides this, "perpetrate," not "carry on," is the verb which idiomatic rectitude now requires in connexion with "violences," if any one should still prefer it to "acts of violence." But we suspect that an oldish author is here unfairly set up as a mark for animadversion.

"'I have not *wilfully* committed the least mistake.' A 'mistake' cannot be *wilful*. Read 'knowingly.'" P. 42. There is muddleheadedness, here, somewhat beyond that—and it is not slight,—which the author displays ordinarily. Whether a "mistake" can, or cannot, be "wilful," the author implies that it can be "knowing." With regard to the sentence quoted, we have not to consider whether either "wilful" or "knowing" can qualify "mistake." What we have to consider is, whether the *commission of a mistake* can be "wilful." "*Wilfully* committed," of a "mistake," is "committed pur-

posely;" "*knowingly* committed" is "committed consciously." The quotation is pure of all error.

"'Not *only* Jesuits can equivocate.' 'You *only* have stood by me throughout.'" P. 59. We are told that "only" is, in these cases, wrong for "alone." In the first sentence we see nothing to mend. If, however, its "only" is to give place to "alone," "alone" must be placed after "Jesuits;" else the result is English which most judges deem to be of very questionable propriety.[1] As to the second sentence, that, likewise, may quite well stand as it is.

"'Thanks should have been given equally to my colleagues in these labours as to myself.' Read '*equally as to* myself.'" P. 66. This "equally as to" is no longer accepted as English, at least in the southern parts of Great Britain.

Writing of the relative "that," as contrasted with "which,"[2] the author says: "It is in closer

[1] "Alone," as used below, has never won the approval of our best writers:

"It is not the beauty alone of my beloved that transports me; it is not *alone* her gentle engaging manner." Mrs. Sarah Austin, *Fragments from German Prose Writers* (1841), p. 190.

"Was it *alone* the closeness of this fulfilment which made her heart flutter?" George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Vol. ii., p. 281.

[2] The following note, professedly far from exhaustive, given us by an ingenious friend, is not inapposite here:

"'That' and 'which' I think I may shortly state my rule about as follows: When the image in the mind is indefinite, use 'that';

connexion with the immediately preceding noun. The difference has been well illustrated by comparing 'There was a public-house next door *which* was a great nuisance' with 'There was a public-house next door *that* was,' &c. The former expression means that the fact of its being next door, the latter that the house itself was a nuisance." P. 32. The English of the explanation is noticeable for its badness, and so is some of the punctuation of the extract. And is the explanation to be received? In our opinion, the two modes of expression given are wholly equipollent, except that the second is Scotch, rather than English. Further, only if we dwell on "public-house next door," can the first bear the sense which is assigned to it.

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when definite, 'which.' *E.g.*, 'things *that* float and fly,' meaning, be the things what they may; 'things *which* float and fly,' meaning those things which I have in my mind,—though there may be others,—ships and balloons.

"Compare the use of the conjunctive in Latin, in such phrases as 'sunt qui *dicant*,' indefinite, 'there are *people that* say'; and 'sunt qui *dicunt*,' definite, 'there are *certain people*'—John, Thomas, &c.,—'*who* say.'

"But I really do not know whether there is any historical justification for distinguishing thus between the use of 'that' and the use of 'which.'"

We may add, that, in our belief, the best modern English writers often choose between 'that' and 'which' according to the requirements of euphony. Further, 'that,' in many positions, would be too weak; and 'which,' in many, would be too emphatic.

The author, when he comes to treat of "purity in the use of words," pp. 33-38, is, every here and there, too nice by half, besides singularly undervaluing popular apprehension. He says: "We may lay it down as a rule, not to use any word that is unintelligible or ambiguous to the majority of readers, or that conveys the impression of pedantic antiquarianism." And then we are warned against *behest, beholden,*[1] *circumstantiate, methinks, poesy, vouchsafe,* "I had as *lief*,"[2] "*ob-*

[1] Both in his *Essays* and in his *History*, Lord Macaulay has this word. As to "circumstantiate" and "vouchsafe," what terms, occasionally, are more appropriate?

[2] Horne Tooke, in his *Diversions of Purley*, writes thus of "lief," "liever," "lievest": "No modern author, I believe, would now [*sic*] venture any of these words in a serious passage; and they seem to be cautiously shunned and ridiculed, in common conversation, as a vulgarity."

Since the date of this, 'lief' or 'lieve,' and 'liever' or 'liefer,' have advanced in respectability. Cowper, Madame D'Arblay, Jane Austen, J. P. Kemble, Lord Byron, Coleridge, and Southey have the first; the Rev. H. F. Cary and Southey, the second; Mr. Charles Reade, in *Griffith Gaunt*, both. And with Mr. Reade coincide, on this point of usage, some of our most refined living writers. "Lief" is used by Cardinal Newman, in the *British Critic* (1838), Vol. xxvii., p. 211, and in his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (1851), p. 128; by Mr. John Morley, in his *Rousseau* (1873), Vol. ii., p. 205, and in his *Diderot*, &c. (1878), Vol. ii., p. 310; and by Professor F. W. Newman. "Liefer" has the patronage of Mr. Walter H. Pater, in his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), p. 32: 'And yet had men *liefer* by knowledge never find that which they seek, than by love possess that thing, which, also, without love were in vain found."

noxious to fluctuations,"[1] "the *capital* members of a sentence." Among "common English vulgarisms" he reckons *contrariwise,*[2] *pell-mell, sham,*[3] *topsy turvy, currying favour,*[4] *dancing attendance, cast in his teeth, see with half an eye, he slipped through his fingers, turn an honest penny;*[5] among

[1] The Rev. Dr. James Martineau writes, and not at all distressingly: "His occasional faults, his vehement expression of opinion, his severe condemnation of individuals not fairly *obnoxious to personal reproach,* we feel no desire to draw forth for censure." *Miscellanies* (1852), p. 104.

[2] See, for it, Cardinal Newman's *Church of the Fathers* (1842), p. 363, and his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), p. 68.

But who would scruple to employ, in any kind of discourse, "contrariwise," or, in almost any kind, "pell-mell" and "topsy-turvy"?

[3] Forgetting himself, the author speaks, at p. 38, of "sham creations." And he need not take shame to himself for so doing. Lord Macaulay, in his *Essays,* has "sham" as a verb active; and, in his *History,* Chap. xii., as a verb neuter.

[4] Lord Macaulay, in his *Essays,* and also in his *History,* uses this expression repeatedly. See, for it, also the Rev. Sydney Smith's *Works* (ed. 1850), p. 274. And it occurs in Cardinal Newman's *Callista* (1856), p. 59, and in Mr. Leslie Stephen's *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking* (1873), p. 73.

Coleridge, in Vol. iii. of his *Literary Remains,* has "*curry* favour," at p. 196, and the eccentric "*curry* pardon," at p. 250. Southey has "*curry* a little popularity": *Selections from the Letters,* &c., Vol. ii., p. 148. No less unusual is an expression used by Edmund Campian: "He *curryed acquaintance and friendship* with meere Irish enemyes," &c. *A Historie of Ireland* (1571), p. 162 (ed. 1809).

[5] The Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon,—of Yester, near Edinburgh—who died in 1794, is about as overstrained and artificial, in his delicacy, as Professor Nichol. See his *Works* (ed. 1802), Vol. iv.,

"ungainly contractions," *an exhibit, hipped, you take me, they fell out.*[1] *Ventilate, potential,* and *quadrate* we are advised to employ only as technical terms of physical science; *objective* and *subjective,* in metaphysics alone; and *probation* we are admonished to confine to law-language. "Foreign words and phrases, though vindicating their introduction, when they fill a gap in the language, and supply us with new terms for new foreign things, are apt to be used in place of equally expressive English terms." But, if we possess "equally expressive English terms," how

pp. 458–475. "Forsooth," "all of them," and "once in a while" are there attainted of vulgarity; and "helter-skelter," "topsy-turvy," "upside down," "at sixes and sevens," "a man is *taken in,*" "that was a *hit,*" "gratis dictum," "ipse dixit," and "His Al mighty *fiat*" are adjudged to be either "cant" or "low phrases." We could easily show that elegant English writers of the author's day did not so regard them.

With respect to constraint by the demands of Pharisaic convention, much less strait-laced than Dr. Witherspoon is another Scotch dictator on our language, of considerably more recent date. Dr. Samuel Neil, in his *Elements of Rhetoric,* &c. (1854), would enlarge our vocabulary by "custodier," "denotive," "exemplative," "manifestive," and "supposititious" in the sense of "hypothetical." Talk of regicide, of cannibalism, nay, even of Calvinism, or any other patibulary piacle, in comparison with the cold-blooded geniture of such quisquilious monstrosities as these! Why, a man could hardly do worse, if he invented a brand-new form o allotheism, and came out a sesquideist, or a quaternitarian, for example.

[1] Coleridge goes so far as to use the substantive "fall-out," for "quarrel." See his *Literary Remains,* Vol. iv., p. 258.

can they "fill a gap in the language"? Be this as it may, "some of these are occasionally useful," strange to say; and, as specimens of such, are named *belles-lettres, connaisseur, émeute, fracas, hauteur*, and *sortie*. These words, provided he has at first described them aright, the author should refuse to countenance in any case.

The silly and obtuse presumptuousness of what follows could not easily be matched: "Coleridge and others are wont to use Germanisms, as *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, to veil a confusion of thought. They think that certain distinctions cannot be expressed in English: being imaginary, they cannot be expressed at all." "Reason" and "understanding," in metaphysical terminology, are now better discriminated than they were fifty or sixty years ago; and, if Coleridge and others used their sole foreign equivalents, *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, it was only because they acutely perceived and sensibly utilized the advantage of memorative symbols. The sight of the German words was, doubtless, eminently helpful to many who, without knowing more than stray expressions of the German language, had acquired some insight into German speculation. Southey somewhere speaks of "perfect Scotch bold-faced impudence," and in connexion with metaphysics,

aptly enough for us. To assert that *Vernunft* and *Verstand* were ever brought forward "to veil a confusion of thought," and that the distinctions marked by them are "imaginary," and "cannot be expressed at all," is simply the most childish effrontery and stultiloquence.

As prefatory to a long list of words to be shunned, we read: "A young writer should never invent a word at all, nor use any of the following, which have been, for the most part of late years, foisted upon our tongue." In the list are included *concept, scientist, philologer, etymon, concatenate, conserve, fictional, noetic, safeguarded, protended, penology, disgustful, peccant.* It is, we submit, imperfect guidance that has declined to define the age at which a youth attains his verbarian majority, and gains a plenary title to estate in the vocabulary sacred to adults. If "a young writer" has occasion to treat of a *concept*, for instance, we are left to suppose that he must content himself with a periphrasis for the scientific appellation of the venerable object pointed to. But how long? Till he can grow a full beard? Till he marries? Till he has a hundred a year? Little, too, we suspect, has the author studied the details of our vernacular dictionary chronologically. And other observations here

suggest themselves in abundance. Touching *scientist*, a term which no one, unless dominated by the narrowest caprice, would now disfavour, what possible objection is there to it?[1] Again, *philologer* is preferred to the later *philologist* by more than one fastidious living author.[2] And so we might go on, but for want of space.

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[1] This compendious vocable was, possibly, originated by the learned Dr. Whewell. At any rate, he recommends it in the first edition of his *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*, published as long ago as 1840. Analogous to it, as formations, are *aurist*, *casuist*, *deist*, *dentist*, &c., &c.

[2] Just before the present day, *philologer*—which has lately been Cantabrigian, rather than Oxonian,—was patronized by such punctualists as Bishop Thirlwall, Archdeacon Hare, Dr. J. W. Donaldson, Professor Henry Malden, and Mr. H. Fox Talbot. It was preferred by Horne Tooke, at an earlier period.

Older authorities for it than any vouched in the dictionaries are Edmund Bolton (about 1618), Bishop Mountagu (1621), and Bishop Earle (1628).

A few writers, not content with "philologist" or "philologer," find satisfaction in "philologian." Such are the Rev. Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews* (ed. 1860), p. 259; Mr. Charles Stuart Parker, in *Essays on a Liberal Education* (1867), p. 61; and Mr. Ruskin, *Val d'Arno* (1874), p. 150. Mr. Thomas Carlyle, not unnaturally, is for "philologue."

Before "theologian" became firmly established, "theologue," "theologer," and "theologist" had, all, been in extensive vogue.

Dr. W. G. Ward, in his *On Nature and Grace*, Book i. (1860), p. 288, has *psychologian*, for *psychologist*.

After all, why those who choose to write *philologer* should not choose to write, with our ancients, *physiologer*, also, it is hard to say.

Grammatist and *philosophist*, used pejoratively, violate analogy, and have no support from *sophist*. Puttenham (1589) has *philosophist*, for *philosopher*.

Under the head of "the more recent Anglo-Saxon or Old English pedantry," we are cautioned to eschew "such barbarisms as" *regrettable, usable, unwisdom,* and "the anonymous *remarker,*"[1] all which are very easy to put up with. But how is "the more recent," &c., exemplified by *regrettable, usable,* and *remarker?* Or by *a try,* which is bracketed with them? We find added, with all gravity, "'*un-yo-through-some-ness* of *stuff,*' for 'the *impenetrability* of *matter.*'" Here we have a poor caricature, or else a misrecollection, of the jocular "*thoroughfaresomeness* of *stuff.*"[2]

In his endeavour to be critical, the author not seldom overshoots the mark. He would not allow us to write "first aggressor," "institutions and government," "pleasure and satisfaction," "courage and resolution,"[3] "prudent policy and provident wisdom," "both of them," "all of

[1] For "remarker" the dictionaries quote Dr. Watts and Lord Bolingbroke. Goldsmith used the word in 1762, in the *Citizen of the World,* Letter cviii.; George Colman, in 1765, as appears from his *Prose on Several Occasions* (1787), Vol. ii., p. 69. Madame D'Arblay, too, has it.

Dr. Parr's foolish hesitation at it—see his *Works,* Vol. iii., p. 377, foot-note ‡,—we must here refer to. Eventually, and in a wiser mood of mind, the Doctor gave in to it, "from necessity, or, at least, for the sake of avoiding the tiresome periphrasis of saying the writer of the remarks.'"

[2] See, for this expression, the *Philological Museum,* Vol. i. (1832), p. 360.

[3] P. 49.

them," "self-same,"[1] "I am so angry to hear it said *that* I am incapable, *that* I shall resign,"[2] "primarily," "summarily," "peremptoriness," "drudged," "fledged," "budged."[3] Yet the preceptor who is thus over-punctilious can speak of distinguishing "between two possible meanings of one word, as when we say 'sense and construction,' in contradistinction to 'sense and sensibility.'"[4] His meaning we can make out, to be sure; but, as often happens, he does not say what he means to say.

To what length, owing to his lack of qualification for his self-elected office, he can go astray in his teachings, it would, indeed, be quite enough to refer to the fact, already mentioned, that he reprobates *regrettable, usable, remarker*, and *unwisdom* as "barbarisms." Let us take the last and least common of these four words. In 1840, Dr. Arnold ventured the ancient *unwisdom;* and, since then, it has been used by many writers as little likely as he to trespass into "barbarisms," namely, Cardinal Newman, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, Mr. Froude, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Swinburne, not to enumerate others. That Professor Nichol did not know this is much more probable than improbable; and to be uninformed

[1] P. 50. [2] P. 59. [3] P. 75. [4] P. 49.

here would, since he claims to sit in judgment on the expression, tell against him strongly. And still more strongly would it tell against him, if, duly informed on the subject, he ignored his lights, to the effect of affixing the stigmatic mark of "barbarism" to that which, if not positively laudable, is, at least, entitled to immunity from all censure. It has been well said, by Sir George W. Dasent,[1] that our language "is the glory of far-sighted philologists, and the confusion and despair of purists and precisians."

Of the author's commendable and successful solicitude to throw light on palpable obscurities we are offered numerous testimonies. One such may be given. "'Two sisters *want washing*.' This advertisement has a double ambiguity: both verb and participle [*sic*] are ambiguous. It really means 'they desire to wash;' it might mean 'they require to be washed.'" P. 58. The utility, to dwellers beyond the Tweed, of this ingenuous and illuminative exposition, we would not be thought to undervalue. It must, accordingly, have been in momentary oblivion of their national idiosyncrasy, that the maxim was enunciated, at p. 43: "Be careful to avoid con-

[1] *Jest and Earnest* (1873), Vol. i., p. 310.

tradicting yourself within the limits of the same page." Even a Scotch Professor, if he has been half-denaturalized by Oxford, can learn, it seems, to nod.

But we must draw to a close. With rare exceptions, "North Britons" would do prudently in leaving it to others to teach the language proper to England. They have to learn that the *intellectus sibi permissus* can aid them next to nothing in discharging this function aright. Facts, without a knowledge of which it is impossible to arrive at tenable conclusions touching good or justifiable usage, they seem to think it hardly better than needless to investigate. Traditional or fortuitous prejudices satisfy them to the full; and such prejudices as are the least reconcilable with liberal literary associations are those which they obtrude the most peremptorily. As to using our speech, notoriously they succeed best, when they are least ambitious. "Scotchmen", as Southey long ago observed,[1] "are apt to aim at a fine style, be-

[1] *Selections from the Letters*, &c., Vol. iv., p. 445. Writing in 1829, Southey, after dwelling on the injury which he supposed our language to have suffered, from divers causes, in recent times, goes on to say: "To this injury the Scotch have greatly contributed; for, composing in a language which is not their mother-tongue, they necessarily acquire an artificial and formal style, which—not so much through the merit of a few, as owing to the perseverance of others, who, for half a century, seated themselves on the bench

cause they are not writing in their mother-tongue, when they write English; and the only art of composition which they do not study is that of concealing the art." Their acquaintance with the idiomatic niceties of English is, in most cases, essentially that of foreigners. Moreover, vulgarity, despite their painful efforts to steer clear of it, is a pitfall into which they very generally stumble; the alternative being, too frequently, what Sir Thomas Browne would have sesquipedalized as lumbaginous maladroitness.

Much more than we have said, and that far from eulogistic, has been suggested to us by the little treatise which, in a minute, we shall have done with. To be frank, apart from the auspices under which it has been presented to the public, the book would have asked for no notice whatsoever. Professor Nichol has indubitably mistaken his vocation. Call to discourse on English Composition he has none that is discoverable. Alike to expedient accuracy of thought, adequateness of

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of criticism,—has almost superseded the vernacular English of Addison and Swift." *Colloquies*, &c., Vol. ii., p. 297.

Within the last half-century, the influence, such as it was, which Scotchmen brought to bear on the English of England has all but wholly passed away. The few traces of it which are discernible, as in "greed," "sparse," "proven," "to the fore," "all the same," &c., need not disquiet any one. Very different, however, is the case in America.

information, amplitude of view, and liberality of taste, he is all but an entire stranger. In any case, instruction such as he has to impart can effect but little good. Accepted unquestioningly, it would even go far to disqualify its recipients for just appreciation of those writers who handle our language with the nearest approach to mastery. The practical example which he sets, as a stylist, is, further, nothing short of ludicrous, and, if followed, as it is hardly likely to be, would work grave mischief. It is the fluent, perspicuous, and fearless English which is dictated by an enlightened and yet chastened sense of native freedom, and not the titubant, perplexed, nerveless, and hidebound English of half-educated, scruple-mongering, provincial pedantry, that a rational lover of our mother-tongue would see inculcated and diffused.

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